

## APPENDIX 3

### West Concord Resident Survey – Summary of Results

#### 1. Introduction

The West Concord Task Force conducted a public survey during the fall/winter of 2008–2009 to discover any recent changes in public opinions about West Concord. This is a report of the findings. Section 2 gives some background on the West Concord Task Force and the survey. Section 3 gives an overview and analysis of the results. Section 4 describes the methodology of the survey design and distribution and of the analysis of results. Appendix A shows the results in detail. Appendix B contains the survey form.

#### 2. Background

The West Concord Task Force (WCTF) was appointed by the Board of Selectmen after the passage of Article 37 at Concord's Annual Town Meeting in April, 2008. This article proposed a plan of action to address citizens' concerns that the core area of West Concord is at risk due to commercial and residential growth pressures.

After being sworn in on July 22, 2008, members of the task force spent the summer reviewing past planning efforts and then proceeded to address its charge, which is, in short, "to seek ways to maintain and enhance the historic identity of West Concord village, improve traffic circulation and public transportation, and protect and promote the enjoyment of natural resources."

While the core area of West Concord is not strictly defined, it generally covers the area of West Concord centered on the Depot and the intersection of Main St. and Commonwealth Ave. and extending out to the Concord Rotary to the north, to the Warner's Pond dam to the northwest, to Rideout field to the west, to the intersection of Main St. and Church St. to the southwest, to Westgate Park to the southeast, to the intersection of Main St./Baker Ave./Cottage St. to the east, and to the Assabet River to the northeast. More loosely, it may be taken to include the entire area of Concord south of Rt. 2 and west of Old Marlboro Rd., or even somewhat to the east of Old Marlboro Rd. See Figure 1.

As part of addressing its charge, the WCTF chose to conduct a public survey. Public surveys had been conducted in the past, most notably as part of the Village Center Study (2007), but even in the year since the Village Center Study, significant changes had occurred, primarily with respect to turnover of commercial properties in the center of West Concord and with increased public awareness about possible impending changes to West Concord's business and industrial areas.

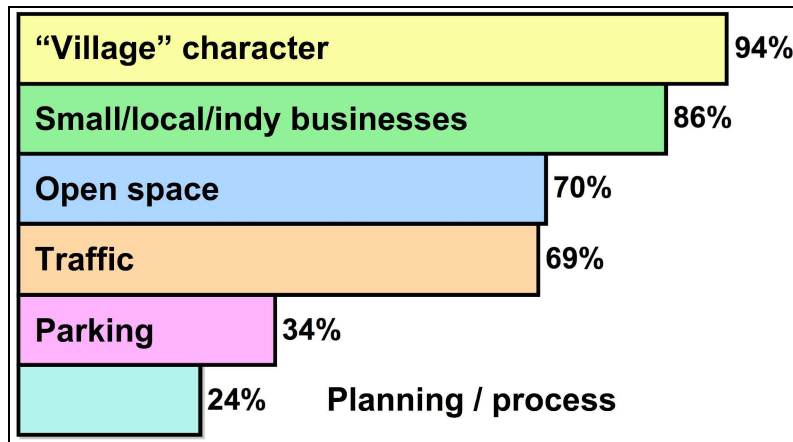
#### 3. Analysis of Results

Submitted comments break down most naturally according to "areas of concern" about the West Concord village. Figure 2 gives an overview of the results, showing that the major areas of concern are West Concord's character (94%) and small/local/independent businesses (86%), with high emphasis as well on traffic and open space (about 70% each) and significant concern about pedestrian/bicycle access (53%), mass transit (38%), parking (34%), and planning and process aspects of government (24%).

Given that the West Concord Task Force came about in large part due to recent and expected development pressures on West Concord's business and industrial areas, it is no surprise that so many respondents put high

emphasis on these areas in commenting on retail and small businesses and in tying them to West Concord's character.

Another significant factor in the creation of the West Concord Task Force was:



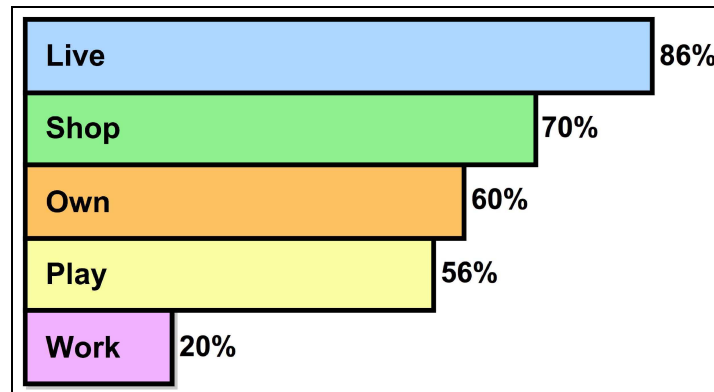
Overview of major areas of concern.

Some citizens' were concerned that West Concord was not receiving sufficient attention from town government; it is likely the case that a disproportional number of respondents are those who feel this way. This should not be taken as in any way invalidating the results but rather as an opportunity to note when and how citizens become engaged in town issues.

West Concord works (for the most part) as a small town should: because it provides useful daily retail options (see Section 3.3), people come to the village center often, traveling a short distance rather than driving miles to a mall or big box store; this keeps money in the community as local shop owners spend profits locally, saves people travel time and gas costs, and reduces damage to the environment from excessive driving. Small, local, non-retail businesses provide local jobs and make the village feel more alive—not just a bedroom community or a shopping district, but a town. Because the village is walkable to a fair degree (see Section 3.4), people get out on the streets instead of moving directly between cars and stores or jobs. Because the village contains a train station, commuters are brought into the center and use other services while they're there. Because the village and environs contain civic buildings and services—a library, an elementary school, a senior center, a post office—people have even more reason to come to the village. Because people come to the village center often and walk around, they run into each other, increasing community feeling (see Section 3.2). Because the village contains and is adjacent to open space (see Section 3.5), people combine their errands with recreation, increasing their time in and around the village. Each of these assets reinforces all the others, building a pleasant and functional small town.

Equally, any threat to any of these facets is a threat to the whole community. The loss of a few key businesses, an increase in traffic that utterly chokes the streets or makes walking impossible, destruction of wetlands leading to flooding, or any other number of threats could unravel the threads that hold the village together. Responses to our public survey show that people are aware of the fragility of West Concord village—already suffering from severe traffic congestion, less walkable than it should be, and now with rapidly arising development pressures.

**3.1 Respondents** - The figure below shows survey respondents' connection to West Concord. Only 23 of the 200 surveys were submitted anonymously. Four respondents live outside Concord, of whom three work in West Concord and the fourth works in Concord.

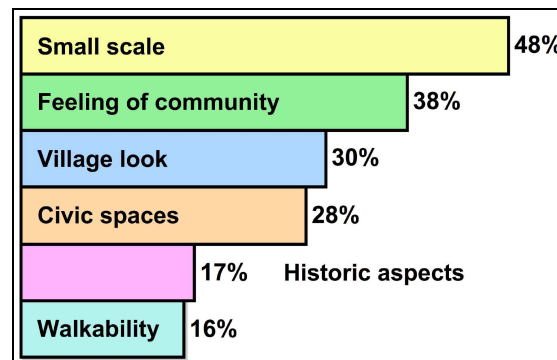


*Connection(s) to West Concord identified by respondents.*

The West Concord Task Force made a somewhat greater effort to contact residents of West Concord by handing out survey forms at the main West Concord polling station and at Concord Greene, and by placing survey forms in the Fowler Library, which is in the center of West Concord. However, the survey was pitched to *all* residents of Concord, and to those who pass through West Concord, by “advertising” it in the local paper, on local cable, and by several other town-wide means.

The “Own” checkbox was unclear as to whether it referred to commercial property only or also to home ownership and this should be taken into account in evaluating the significance of its response rate.

**3.2 Character** - A total of 94% of surveys mentioned any aspect of West Concord's character, explicitly or by implication; 56% of surveys mentioned character explicitly. The figure below shows the facets of West Concord's character that respondents most highlighted.

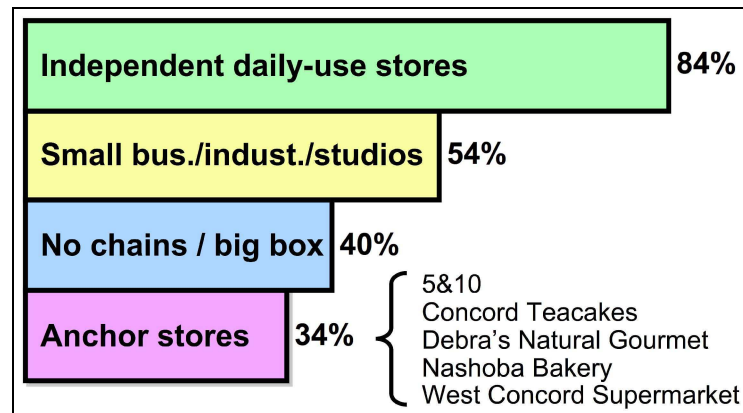


*Village character*

Note that business, transportation, open space, housing, and several other issues discussed below also contribute to West Concord's character.

**3.3 Business** - A total of 86% of surveys mentioned any aspect of retail or other business, or business or industrial

land use. See figure below. People showed most concern for the small, independent retail stores that provide for people's daily needs and are the lifeblood of the town center. Running a close second, however, are our small, independent businesses, especially startups, artist's workshops, and studios that usefully inhabit old spaces left over from West Concord's days as the industrial Concord Junction. These businesses provide jobs, some to residents, and give West Concord an interesting, lively, "funky" feel while helping to preserve the memory of the past. Eighteen percent of surveys specifically mentioned maintaining low rents or costs for small, local, independent retail and other businesses.



***Businesses to protect.***

Clear threats to local, independent businesses include chains, which return profits to a distant corporate headquarters, big box stores, which do the same and add massive parking needs and increased traffic, and what we may term "boutiquification"—an influx of small, often independent, but high-price stores that sell luxuries and that don't cater to local people's daily needs, usually leading to higher commercial rents and increased out-of-town traffic (since customers must be drawn from a wide area to support stores where any particular customer shops infrequently). A total of 40% of respondents specifically mentioned their opposition to chains (including big box stores) and 10% specifically mentioned galleries or boutiques or employed such creative terms as "boutiquification", "boutiquization" or "gallerization". A single chain drug store, for example, could put several of our local retail stores out of business, causing a—dare we say—"chain reaction" as those stores would likely be replaced by other chains or boutiques, unraveling more and more threads of our West Concord village.

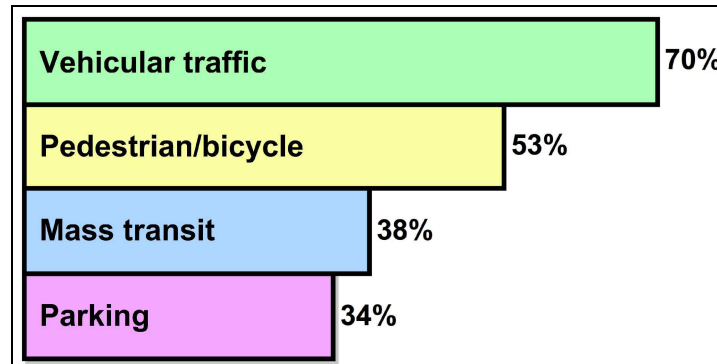
Beautification and modernization are, somewhat paradoxically, both a benefit and a threat to local, independent businesses. Both require money and therefore tend to raise costs and rents. But if an area is too run-down or too many properties are unused, the area will repel customers and other visitors. Some of West Concord's old buildings have been maintained to a minimal degree over the last few decades, leading to low costs for business, but this low maintenance can't continue forever as buildings naturally deteriorate. Significant portions of West Concord are likely to be redeveloped in the relatively near future, and it will be particularly difficult to allow this redevelopment to take place while retaining enough daily-use stores, startups, workshops, and industrial history to preserve West Concord's character and functionality.

Respondents mentioned many existing businesses by name or type; in all, 36 different specific businesses or business types. The five most commonly mentioned stores are, in alphanumeric order, the 5&10, Concord Teacakes, Debra's Natural Gourmet, the Nashoba Bakery, the West Concord Supermarket. Each of these stores was mentioned by name in at least 15 surveys; one was mentioned in 60 surveys. Over a third of surveys mentioned one or more of these stores. Respondents particularly mentioned how these (and other) stores provide

goods and services to the community that are useful in daily life.

One respondent suggested creating a marketing booklet or website with listings by merchandise categories. Just such a booklet, listing independent businesses throughout Concord, was issued in the last year. Perhaps this booklet needs broader marketing of its own.

**3.4 Transportation & Parking** - A total of 84% of surveys mentioned any aspect of transportation, and 34% mention any aspect of parking. We divide transportation into several components in this report, as shown in the figure below.



*Transportation categories.*

- 3.4.1 Vehicular Traffic** - Concerns with respect to vehicular traffic were “all over the map.” While 70% of surveys mentioned traffic and 43% generally addressed any of reducing traffic, preventing an increase, or increasing safety, the largest specific category was reduction at 24%, followed by keeping through-traffic out of the center at 16%, with no other specific category topping 10%.

Whereas respondents are generally in agreement about most concerns with respect to West Concord, this is least true for traffic. In some cases this is because people’s concerns differ, for example, reducing congestion vs. increasing safety; in other cases it is because people’s interests differ, for example, maintaining a rural feel with narrow roads and few signals vs. improving flow with wider roads and more signals or more complex signals. Respondents made a variety of specific suggestions with respect to particular roadways, intersections, or aspects of traffic; see Appendix A.4.1.

Some perennial suggestions were repeated: for example, to widen Commonwealth Ave., or widen it in one direction, by removing parking on one side or by making it into a partial or complete one-way loop from the 99 to the railroad tracks and possibly up Church St. and around Main St. Such widening might improve traffic flow, but also might harm businesses due to decreased parking or by preventing drivers from passing directly by, or might make the roadway less safe—particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists—by increasing traffic speed; furthermore, truck traffic might be unable to make the turn across the train tracks and onto Church St., which might prevent trucks from entering the center but create delivery problems for some businesses and create major traffic headaches whenever trucks mistakenly entered the center.

Improvements to Beharrell St. were also suggested, varying from adding a second outlet and/or extending it to connect to the train parking lot, to altering its existing exit to allow right turns only, to allowing only low vehicles (not trucks or SUVs) to park in the Commonwealth Ave. spots adjacent to the exit for the sake of sight lines.

- 3.4.2 Pedestrian and Bicycle Transportation - Pedestrian or bicycle transportation was mentioned in 53% of surveys. Nearly half (47%) of respondents asked for better sidewalks, more sidewalks, or other improved non-vehicular connections in West Concord.

As shown under village character in Section 3.2, 16% of respondents particularly noted the walkable nature of the West Concord village and expressed a desire to preserve or increase it. Many of those who mentioned walkability pointed out how it contributes to making West Concord a “real”, viable town center.

Nine respondents asked for better snow removal for sidewalks. Calls for this seemed to increase among surveys received later in the winter. It was a snowy winter, and budget constraints due to the poor economy made snow removal particularly challenging this year. Snow removal calls back to the question of West Concord’s character: should it be rural in nature with sidewalks unplowed, or should Concord expend the funds to plow sidewalks promptly, in support of a walkable town center and environs?

Eight respondents asked for improvements to the sidewalk on the Route 62 bridge over the Assabet River. On both sides, the sidewalk is narrow; in summer it is sometimes bordered by poison ivy and in winter it is frequently impassable due to snow and ice. The bridge is narrow for traffic as well, and since there is only a curb to separate pedestrians from speeding traffic, it is often frightening to foot traffic. Bicycle traffic must choose between a too-narrow roadway or a too-narrow sidewalk. When the Phase III Main Street project is undertaken with State funds, the Town should make every effort to pursue improving the sidewalks, whether with a new, wider bridge, or with sidewalks cantilevered off the sides of the existing bridge, or in any other way. The poor sidewalks on this bridge are currently an impediment to residents of Concord Greene, Cottage St., and other eastern areas of West Concord and to office workers on Baker Ave. and Baker Ave. Extension, and they inhibit people from traveling between West Concord and downtown Concord other than by car (7 respondents asked for a better pedestrian and/or bicycle crossing for Route 2). Office workers, and to a lesser extent all others mentioned above, would be aided by a path and footbridge between the office park and the West Concord train station. The Town recently applied to the MBTA to incorporate a footbridge into the Assabet River train bridge, which is due to be refurbished or reconstructed in the next year or two, but the MBTA declined to do so. A footbridge can perhaps still be pursued separately.

- 3.4.3 Mass Transit - Comments with respect to mass transit were varied but for the most part in harmony. Fifteen percent of respondents mentioned the train stop as a valued feature of West Concord. Nearly as many (12%) want to prevent an increase in train parking and eight percent want to prevent the creation of a transportation hub in West Concord. These comments are not inconsistent: people like the presence of the train stop but don’t want more cars driving to the train. Improving sidewalks and bike routes might encourage people to walk rather than drive to the train stop. On the other hand, it was not always clear what respondents meant by a transportation hub. For example, while the overwhelming majority of respondents who mentioned the Bruce Freeman Rail Trail were supportive of its existence (see Appendix A.8.6), a few who oppose or wish to alter it may (or may not) want to prevent it being used to commute to the train.

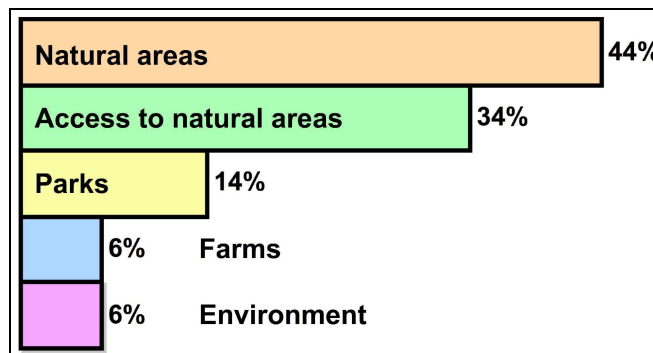
A few respondents called for increased mass transit options: more or faster trains, buses, or shuttles. One respondent called for car rental options, which can perhaps be considered serial mass transit.

- 3.4.4 Parking - A wide variety of comments were made with respect to parking. As was mentioned above

regarding mass transit, twelve percent are opposed to increasing train parking. Eight percent of respondents called for more non-train parking. Previous studies of West Concord, as well as the ongoing study of the West Concord Task Force, have found that there is an adequate supply of parking in West Concord but that people have trouble finding it or accessing it; we feel that survey respondents' calls for more parking generally reflect the need for better parking and not necessarily a need for a greater number of parking spaces.

Some parking lots are divided between public and private parking, or between all-day and short-term parking, but drivers are often not aware that parts of these lots are available for their use. Drivers who pass westward on Commonwealth Ave. looking for street parking but who find all spaces taken have no obvious way to reverse direction and return to find off-street parking. Many spaces are private spaces in fragmented lots and require or imply that drivers should repark their cars in order to patronize a different store, increasing congestion and pollution as drivers make short hops. Drivers who are circulating and looking for an on-street parking space cause congestion as they drive slowly and may compromise safety as they are more likely to be scanning for free spaces than for crossing pedestrians. There is a synergistic opportunity here: if a parking management association can be created to reduce the need to move cars and to make it possible, over time, to consolidate lots or increase connections between them, and if parking locations can be better marked, and if side streets, particularly Beharrell St., can have more or better car connections to main streets, and if pedestrian routes throughout the village can be improved to make it more attractive and safer to walk short distances, it may be possible to improve both traffic and parking conditions by reducing the amount of time people spend searching for parking spaces, and it might be an aid to business as well as walkers would pass by more storefronts.

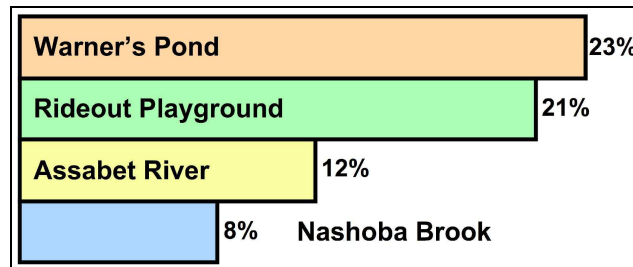
**3.5 Open Space** - A total of 69% of surveys mentioned any aspect of open space. As shown in the figure below, the plurality of comments (44%) regarded preserving natural areas for their own sake, while close to as many (34%) spoke of people's access to natural areas. Parks (in West Concord) and farms (in nearby areas) received some mention, as did preserving the environment: preventing and decreasing pollution, runoff, and light pollution, lowering the carbon footprint, keeping an eye on the Starmet nuclear waste Superfund site, and so forth.



*Major open space categories.*

Several specific open spaces areas around West Concord received mention, as shown in the figure below, most frequently Warner's Pond and Rideout Playground. A considerable number of respondents mentioned waterways or wetlands without naming them specifically (included in the overall percentage for open space, above), and the percentages for the Assabet River and Nashoba Brook should be viewed with this in mind. Respondents who mention Rideout Playground generally wish to preserve Rideout without interior fences, and would like to do

something about cars parking on the adjacent sidewalks along Laws Brook Road. There were several calls for more pocket parks either at the Warner's Pond Dam (where a pocket park is already planned) or without naming a specific location.



*Open space areas receiving most frequent mention.*

A few surveys mentioned Junction Park, but rarely by name. Some referred to it as “the open space by the Depot” or similar words. While it is valuable as a rare scrap of public gathering space, Junction Park currently seems more a no-man’s-land between adjacent areas than an inviting space in its own right. Better landscaping to screen it from the uninviting adjacent parking areas might help, as well as safer steps to the West Concord Shopping Plaza.

**3.6 Planning and Process** - A quarter of respondents mentioned any aspect of government. Twelve percent called for creating a plan or instituting zoning changes or other controls; nine percent called for active, ongoing stewardship. This may be taken either as strong support (given an open survey format) for the Town’s process in creating the West Concord Task Force as a successor to the Village Centers Committee, or may reflect a bias to respond to the survey on the part of those who favor planning.

Paradoxically, as modern society gains more and more means of communication, it becomes harder and harder to reach people. The West Concord Task Force has had much of the same trouble as many town committees and departments in “getting the word out” to citizens. “Getting the word out” is only half the job, of course; the other half is hearing the word of the citizens. Eight respondents specifically asked to be kept better informed by local government and to be included in the process. The Task Force will continue its efforts to inform people of its actions and their purpose and to include citizens in planning its actions.

**3.7 Societal Aspects: Affordability, Diversity, Access, Housing** - Relatively few surveys mentioned housing. On the face of it, responses with respect to housing may seem contradictory, with 22% of respondents asking to limit development of housing and 10% of respondents asking to increase the supply of affordable housing. Delving deeper, we see that the main opposition is to unlimited development of large housing complexes. There were considerably more calls for affordable spaces for businesses (18%) than housing. This probably reflects the reality that in the core West Concord village, businesses currently face more threats than existing housing does, and any new large housing complexes are currently more likely to be built in business or open space than residential space.

**3.8 Restaurants & Other Businesses** - A quarter of respondents asked to keep existing restaurants in West Concord or add more, of any kind or of specific kinds (particularly an ice cream shop). Several wished for other types of businesses. Anyone interested in starting a business in West Concord may wish to refer to Appendix A.8.1 and A.8.2. The major impediment to new restaurants in West Concord at the current time is a lack of wastewater capacity (see Appendix A.8.5).

**3.9 Miscellaneous** - Respondents addressed topics too numerous and diverse to analyze here, including diversity, public spaces, infrastructure, land use, and more. See Appendix A and in particular A.8.



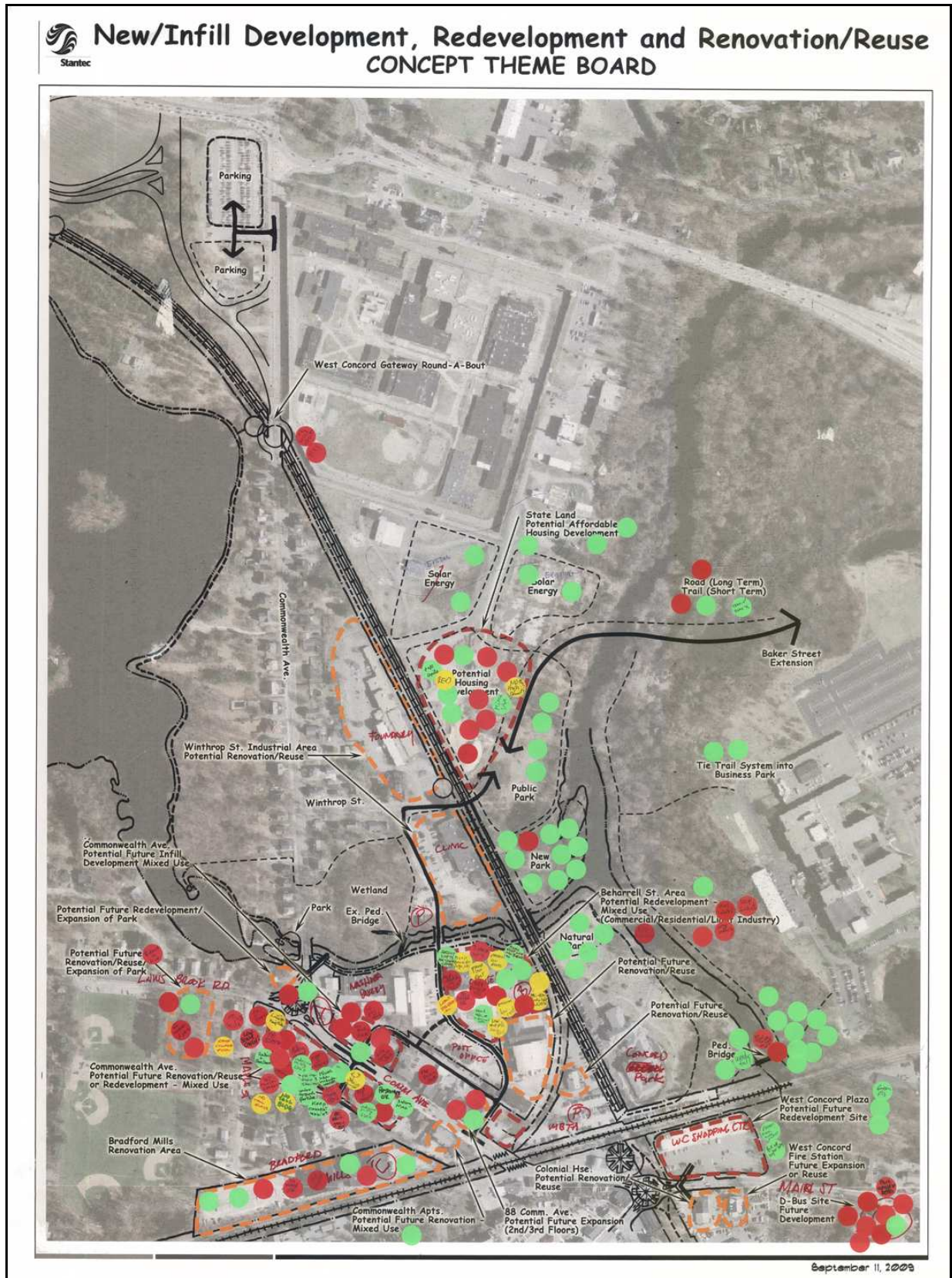
**WEST CONCORD COMMUNITY DESIGN WORKSHOP**  
**September 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009**  
***Comments & Questions from the Public***

- Is there any way to connect Cousins Park with Thoreau School green space? No land behind Shirley St. to allow walking.
- Places now zoned industrial that developers want to change to “mixed-use”: Is there a way to get them (developers) to make a commitment to preserve affordable rents for the businesses that would be displaced by their plans? Tie to approval for zoning change.
- Changing to “mixed use” zone threatens small, independent businesses now present on Beharrell St. can we get a commitment from new owner to keep rents affordable there? Why not keep it industrial and make it affordable?
- “Parks, Open Space, and Trails” concept theme board: this map should have the W. Concord Village at its center, not at the edge!
- New Plaza/Farmers Market – excellent, please expand to allow for open meeting, outdoor acting and opportunities for small local entrepreneurs to obtain permits and have a cart business (West Concord had long tradition of cart business expanding to support entire business/family)
- New street or points of access create new frontage that could lead to new development and more traffic/congestion.
- How much interest is there in a Community Arts Center? And is there a place for it in the plans. West Concord needs more places for people to go to enjoy the community, to do something on a rainy day (the Bowladrome only goes so far) to share, inspire, celebrate.
- Traffic is a problem on Pine Street. Now that bridge is complete. Too many cars using a school neighborhood as a Route 2 cutoff.
- How about practical businesses in WC? No more housing, apartment complexes, etc. – Senior Citizens need CVS, Trader Joe’s etc., along with what they already have. Traffic is a key problem!!! Make life easier – avoid rotaries, etc.
- As a business owner, I’m concerned about the ability of independent local businesses being able to afford to locate in West Concord. For those of us already there we need rents to stay affordable! Keep the Flavor of the village as it is while improving lighting, traffic & pedestrian flow – no 3 story buildings!!
- Maple Street is very concerned about the impact of traffic if the Bradford St. businesses are redeveloped and additional parking is made available. Has any thought been give to how to protect this 100 year old quiet residential street from all this additional traffic? It’s already overloaded and much less desirable (noise) than even a few years ago.
- Invite Trader Joes! 3 stories fine. 3/12 OK? No increase of sewer treatment plan by Town: Private development to provide own treatment.
- Maple Court is a private road – any development on adjacent property will have a huge a HUGE impact on this street. Maple Ct. is a mess as is, dumpsters, pot holes – this street is neglected and ignored. Please consider Maple Court in your design plans and guidelines. Why is it a private road?

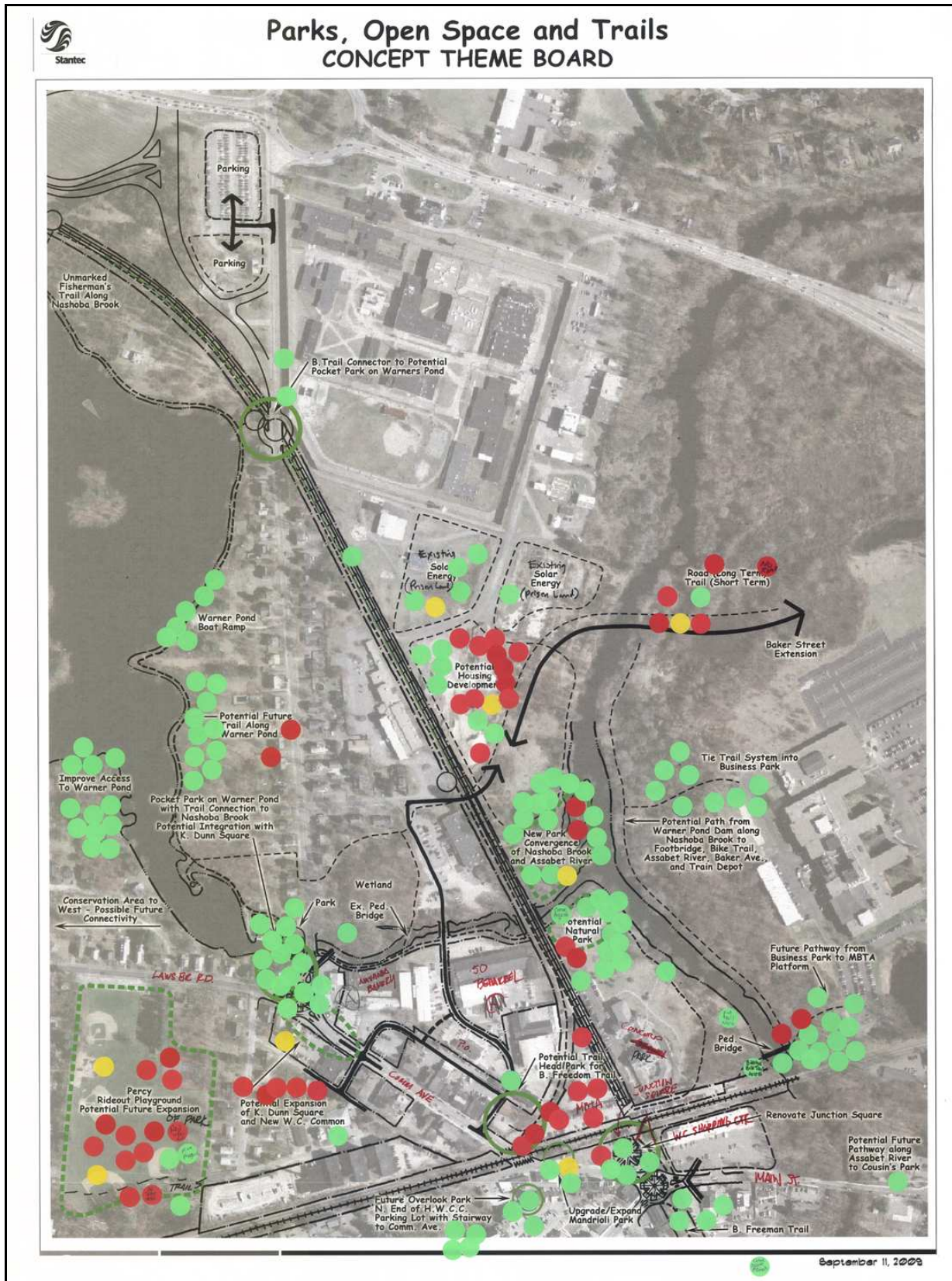
- Cottage/Main intersection (ex Dee bus lot) Canoe access is a great idea: Where is the parking? Community garden (a nice touch) Need to look at improving traffic flow: this is the entrance to West Concord (4/5 street intersection): How about widening at Main/Cottage intersection (going East) to facilitate traffic going left (onto Baker) and right (onto Cottage).
- Think about Church St. One way from Main Street to Comm. Ave. Provide pedestrian crosswalk OR One way from Junction Square to Comm. Ave. (keeps HWCC driveway 2-way access)
- We don't need 100's of new housing units in Concord. That's the economic trend of the 90's and the demographic trend of the 70's. Better, not bigger!
- Need a Transportation to weigh-in on 2-3 alternatives. These 2-3 options will focus the other issues to be decided. Solve/address the traffic problems from train stop by moving platform. Find out what MBTA will allow.
- Is there a way to make sure that any new businesses are no-chain or local? I have see this happen in North Carolina town and great, fun and creative development takes place!
- Lots of residents would like to downsize close to shops so keep the housing option open and add at higher density that works for smaller units. Railroad parking should be large enough to permit over night parking for the travelers who need car parking for a t least 7 days. This will encourage train, bus and air travel.
- Retain pedestrian. Access to Kenny Dun Square; maybe relocate monument/benches/flagpole to pocket park & create T-intersection.
- Town needs to take better care of its green spaces – from Fire Station to Baker Ave. (right of way along north side of Main Street over Assabet River).
- Maple St. property owner is very concerned about redevelopment proposed on Comm. Ave. – height of development looming over existing house.
- High speed train (MBT) possibilities (probabilities) needs professional vetting now to anticipate potential mitigations of adverse outcomes.
- I love the idea of new retail fronting on Beharrell and the new (west) outlet. But until there is traffic, businesses can't thrive. Solution: Re-route MBTA exit so people have to see and pass the new stores. A package detail.
- I like the character that W. Concord has, do no like any ideas of multi story building. A restaurant would be fine.
- Retain simple beauty of Rideout Park – no development
- Develop Bradford Mills – a hidden gem
- Open access to Warner's Pond – it is closed off
- #1 Priority – Local businesses, not national chains
- Sidewalk on Cottage St. to Main St. from Old Marlboro – current pedestrian situation is dangerous.

- Implement priority to preserve and develop local, independent businesses with zoning bylaws that are pro-local business and which restrict chains (many towns and cities have done this nationwide – we can too!)
- Keep 3-story height restriction to retain small, village feel of the Center.
- Have an overarching discussion about the ideal population density for Concord and discuss parameters.
- Community Art Center – W. Concord needs a place to gather and have fun. There is nothing to do on a rainy or cold day. Teen Center – especially if you are a teen in W. Concord or Concord. Something closer than Cambridge that is not Starbucks.
- Town Center Zoning District – Should create not just an overlay but a specific zoning district for WCC specifying build-to lines and mandating mixed-use, storefront character.
- Favor Local Indy's – Add elements in zoning to favor local independent business such as restrictions on store sq. ft, no chains, etc.
- Dino's site – create storefront build-to concept for Dino's site.
- Scale of WCC should not be significantly increased as it would change character and function.
- Commuter rail station should remain.
- Roundabouts good idea (Chris Ryan, AICP)
- Cottages on Winthrop St. Will there be market-rate cottages for elderly? To be in walking distance to library, food market and train? We need more housing like Concord Greene (human scale, aesthetically pleasing, curves. Not like the Conant St development: too monolithic, not human scale, not friendly looking, not easy to walk to town center. We want small houses (not townhouse developments).
- No big developments like Lawsbrook Road/Conant St. cottage that aren't for "only" low income – market rate. Keep scale human and visually interesting. Gathering centers for multi-generations – films, creative ventures, learning. In town – eateries – dinner – walkable – small scale (no bigger than 3 stories) Parking behind and not adding to street congestion.
- Maintain SAFE walking areas for young/developmentally disabled/elders who are living/visiting this area. Be mindful of maintenance costs, i.e., gardens/trees etc.
- No higher than 2 stories in most areas; 3 stories in some. Be concerned = congestion at "99" area – too much auto traffic and congestion – how can bikers pass thru without causing major backups?! What is MBTA planning: do we know specifics now?
- Is this level of population [increasing] within stated goals as a town? If so, how were these goals arrived at? If not, why are we facilitating pop [up] like this? Do not change height maximums. Do not encroach on wetland setbacks. Keep funding village scale. Support independent businesses, not chains or franchises. No special bylaw changes to support developers.
- I concur with all of the above. Also, more high trees along main thoroughfare would be lovely. Mainly, limit growth. No franchises. In other words, do what Concord Center does. Don't see a lot of big development there, do we?
- Maintain current heights of building. Keep small scale. Enhance open space. As decisions are being developed, offer residents opportunity to vote on three potential options that can be clearly outlined.

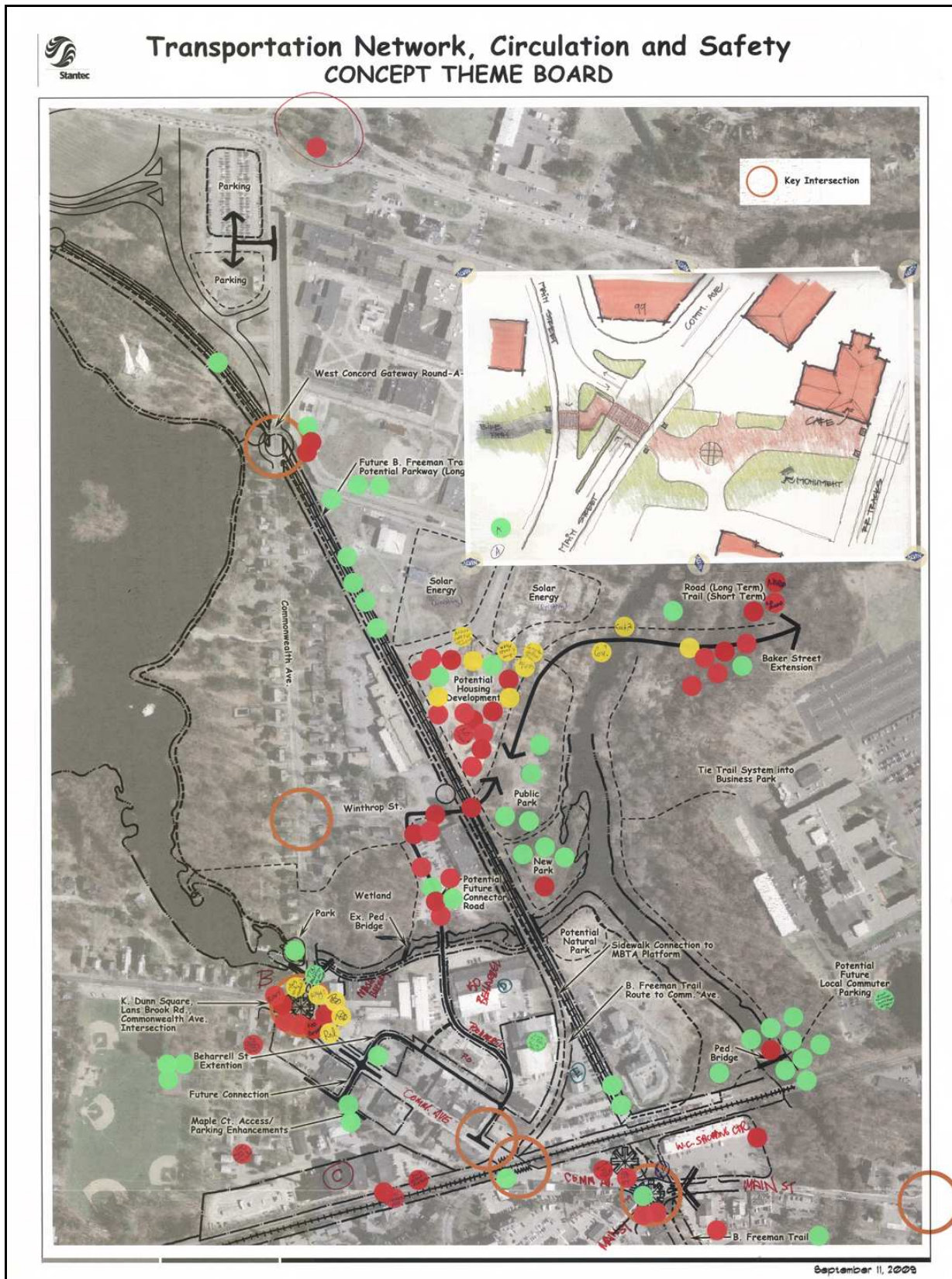
- West Concord is great the way it is – there is real community. There is an opportunity for small and new businesses. Any changes have to keep the village character, the small scale and meant that rents do not exclude those who are here now.
- Concerned about keeping real stores, parking/traffic, population growth.
- Keep Rideout the same. For sure keep Ken Dunn triangle the same. Yes!! For commuter parking at Rt. 2 with the Trolley to station.
- One more important item for West Concord – Please make sure there are toilet facilities available for the public – maybe attached to a store or business that would be responsible for their cleanliness and supplies either on a volunteer or paid basis.
- Please consider low cost buildings (even on prison land) that will retain good heat during the winter and still be comfortable for those incubator businesses and arts we would like to keep in West Concord.
- Building height and design review needs to be addressed, through zoning changes, etc. Six stories belong somewhere over near Newbury Court and the hospital – never in the center. Allen Chair may represent the appearance of four stories even though its three but the town must consider density there as well as elsewhere in the center. Town's fire equipment must also be taken into consideration.
- If Beharrell St. is extended to Commonwealth Avenue by the prison, zoning considerations need addressing on the property that now gains frontage on the extension as well as on Commonwealth Ave. side.
- Traffic circulation does not seem to be addressed in the center, with the exception of opening Beharrell in two places. This was a key action item when this process originally began. Area between Tea Cakes and 99 is hard to manage.
- W. Concord Super Market will no be pleased and will dig in their heels with suggestion to those parking spaces from the front of their store for BFRT. How do they plan to sweeten that pot? Here, parking is a problem.
- Property from Bradford St to Maple St minus the big white house on the corner of Maple, unacceptable. Very important to keep the village appearance there. Appears to be a dominant part of “new development”. The look of a strip mall is scary and unacceptable.
- The amount of residential units on Bradford, Beharrell, Commonwealth Ave and the prison land will add tremendous density, traffic and possibility of many empty units depending on economy. Please consider this housing in combination with each other.
- Please place a zoning restriction on big box stores in West Concord.
- Junction Square is there for a purpose – to use as a good meeting spot for all, including the BFRT users. I was told that money for land for a Town Common could be provided from CPA funds. Why use it for this when so many other ideas are floating out there?











# STREETSCAPE





# West Concord Village Visual Preference Survey Results

## General Description of the Visual Preference Survey

### Background

A Visual Preference Survey<sup>1</sup> is being conducted provide ideas for conceptual development, public enhancements, land use regulations and design guidelines that would further define the community's priorities and vision for guiding future changes in West Concord Village. A Visual Preference Survey (VPS) is a visual format for public input where participants respond to images of development, land use, and public infrastructure and rank them according to their own tastes. The images are then used are shown in the preferred types of changes people prefer in the Village over time.

### The Language Dilemma

"What do you want your community to look like?" It is a difficult question which can lead to some very vague or esoteric answers. People just don't know how to put their feelings about village and neighborhood design into words. We often resort to listing examples; "You know, like downtown Saratoga Springs" or "It should sort of look like Woodstock." The trouble with answers like these is that not every community has the geographic or historic context that make communities like Saratoga Springs or Woodstock work the way they do. When you're planning in, say, Cambridge, Massachusetts, examples like these just aren't that relevant.

### A Picture is Worth...

Sometimes it is best to give up on words and to toss aside the jargon of terms and phrases that can separate us from the physical world we are attempting to design around us. We can see what we like, and what we don't like, but most people can't draw for you what they'd like to see, and having designers draw and redraw development options just isn't efficient. But still, people know what they like, even if they can't find a way to communicate it. This is the basis of the Visual Preference Survey (VPS); a graphic survey of stakeholders. The term was coined by A. Nelessen Associates (ANA) for their public participation visioning process. The Visual Preference Survey (VPS) is a method of gathering information from the stakeholders of a planning or development project by showing a variety of images in a short period of time and collecting their reactions to the features conveyed in each image.

### How the VPS works

A variety of images are used, from those gathered in the community to images from a variety of comparable places from the consultant's image library. Additionally, computer generated simulations of alternative development options can be used with photos taken in the community. The VPS is administered in conjunction with community surveys (resident, business and property owners). The image evaluations and the survey responses are reviewed and, the results of the two, taken together, inform the planners and designers working on the project what the stakeholders want and need in the village.

## Creating the West Concord Visual Preference Survey

The choices for images used in the West Concord Village survey were based on the following:

- *What are the intended products of the West Concord Master Plan?* – This led to the inclusion of potential building and property uses, traffic and parking improvements, streetscape enhancements, parks and open spaces, and wayfinding sign options.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Visual Preference Survey is a registered trademark of A. Nelessen Associates (ANA).

- *What are the goals and priorities of the Task Force?* – This led to the inclusion of small village development and public open space options.
- *What are the ranges of public opinion?* – This led to the inclusion of images showing different mixes, scale densities, and variations on type of architecture based on previous studies and public surveys.
- *What may be necessary to support the types of potential development?* – This led to the inclusion of public infrastructure enhancement such as streetscape and parking.

An attempt will be made to understand these preferences and use the results of the VPS, community surveys and design workshop to help create/revise land use regulations and design guidelines that promote appropriate development while at the same time maintaining the public preferences and principles.

## Assessing and Applying the VPS Results

### The Visual Ranking System

The survey form provides the participants the opportunity to numerically rank the images with a maximum range of +3 (desired) to -3 (not desired) with 0 being neutral. The focus of the images on certain aspects of each land use type tends to lead the viewer to certain decisions. As an example, including substantial open space in an image of a mixed use development project leads to viewer to rank the image according to both their values placed on open space as well as on mixed use. In addition, the “negatives” or questions about the image are perceived from the standard deviation in the rankings. The higher the standard deviation, the less sure we are that the idea will be accepted without additional information or discussion.

A slightly different format is being used for West Concord to gather information to be used in conceptual planning and the writing of land use codes and design guidelines. The slideshow of images fall into one of six categories:

1. Streetscape and Pedestrian Treatments
2. Building Design, Density and Use
3. Building Frontage, Display and Signs
4. Traffic Circulations and Parking Applications
5. Public Open Spaces, Parks, Trails and Art
6. Gateway and Wayfinding Treatments

Participants rank each image on the score sheet. In addition, for the building and development related slides, participants are asked to indicate one of the following: Required, Encouraged, Permitted, Restricted, Prohibited. The results will be tallied, and a second slideshow is prepared with bar graphs of the results laid over the corresponding images. The participants have a chance to explain why they voted the way they did and in doing so give the master plan consultants a better feel for the community member's values.

### Applications of the VPS

Once the visual preference survey is completed, the information can be translated into land use regulations and design guidelines for future growth and development in West Concord Village. It is important to point out that there are numerous examples of buildings in West Concord that are cherished by the community but don't meet current zoning standards. This is the impetus for preparing design guidelines and revising the regulations so that they are more in keeping with the community's vision for the future. What the Visual Preference Survey provides in addition to the land use analysis and conceptual master plan is clarity on design, density and use considerations that should be addressed in the zoning regulations and design guidelines for West Concord.

## **West Concord Village Visual Preference Survey™**

### **What is a Visual Preference Survey?**

The Visual Preference Survey<sup>2</sup> is one of the tools for the public to give feedback on planning and design alternatives and to participate in the formulation of the West Concord Village Master Plan. A Visual Preference Survey (VPS) is a tool that allows citizens to rate visual concepts of existing and non-existing types of building designs, landscape characteristics, community fabric, architectural styles, signs, growth patterns, etc.

### **Why should I take the Visual Preference Survey?**

Your participation in the Visual Preference Survey provides one way for you to influence: (1) the future look of your community; (2) the content of the West Concord Village Master Plan; and (3) future zoning changes and design guidelines.

### **How to take the Survey?**

You must indicate your preference among a series of images used to illustrate various options for development and public infrastructure enhancements in West Concord Village. To do this you will need to rank **each** photo in a common category, on a scale of -3 to +3, with 0 being neutral. It is acceptable to use the same score for more than one image. Images were selected to demonstrate a range of design and development possibilities, some subtle, some more exceptional.

***Your responses to the images selected should be noted on the last sheet of this packet. For your convenience feel free to remove the response sheet from this packet before you begin.***

### **Why your opinion counts?**

The value of the survey is in the range of opinions, the shared common ground, and the desires expressed by the public, giving a sense of what they would like to see in the community. The objective is to further define the vision for the future development and design of West Concord Village.

### **Survey Form Attached.**

---

<sup>2</sup> TM Visual Preference Survey is a trademark of A. Nelessen Associates (AMA).  
Appendix 3 April 19, 2010

## West Concord Village Visual Preference Survey

Please rank each photo in a common category, on a scale of **-3 (Not Desired) to +3 (Most Desired), with 0 being neutral**. Images were selected to demonstrate a range of design and development possibilities, some subtle, some more exceptional.

### Part 1 - Building Design, Density and Use

QUESTION 1.1 (Adaptive Reuse): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 1.2 (Building Design): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 1.3 (Building Scale & Height): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 1.4 (Neighborhoods/Res. Dev.): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 1.5 (Street Enclosure): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 2 - Building Frontage, Display and Signs

QUESTION 2.1 (Accessory Displays): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 2.2 (Facades): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 2.3 (Frontage Uses): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 2.4 (Signs and Awnings): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 2.5 (Window Display): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 3 - Gateway and Wayfinding Treatments

QUESTION 3.1 (Business Directories): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 3.2 (Directional Sign Systems): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 3.3 (Gateway Treatments): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 3.4 (Informational Kiosks): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 4 - Parks, Open Spaces, Trails and Public Art

QUESTION 4.1 (Open Spaces): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 4.2 (Parks): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 4.3 (Public Art & Focal Points): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 4.4 (Trails): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_

### Part 5 - Streetscape and Pedestrian Treatments

QUESTION 5.1 (Alleys): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 5.2 (Sidewalk Design & Uses): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_  
I \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_ K \_\_\_\_\_ L \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_ N \_\_\_\_\_ O \_\_\_\_\_ P \_\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 5.3 (Furnishings): A \_\_\_\_\_ B \_\_\_\_\_ C \_\_\_\_\_ D \_\_\_\_\_ E \_\_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_\_ G \_\_\_\_\_ H \_\_\_\_\_

I\_\_\_\_ J\_\_\_\_ K\_\_\_\_ L\_\_\_\_ M\_\_\_\_ N\_\_\_\_ O\_\_\_\_ P\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 5.4 (Landscaping): A\_\_\_\_ B\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ E\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_ G\_\_\_\_ H\_\_\_\_

**Part 6 - Traffic Circulation and Parking**

QUESTION 6.1 (Intersections): A\_\_\_\_ B\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ E\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_ G\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 6.2 (Off-Street Parking): A\_\_\_\_ B\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ E\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_ G\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 6.3 (On-Street Parking): A\_\_\_\_ B\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ E\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 6.4 (Road Design): A\_\_\_\_ B\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ E\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_ G\_\_\_\_ H\_\_\_\_

I\_\_\_\_ J\_\_\_\_ K\_\_\_\_ L\_\_\_\_

QUESTION 6.5 (Traffic Calming/Intermodal): A\_\_\_\_ B\_\_\_\_ C\_\_\_\_ D\_\_\_\_ E\_\_\_\_ F\_\_\_\_ G\_\_\_\_ H\_\_\_\_

I\_\_\_\_ J\_\_\_\_ K\_\_\_\_ L\_\_\_\_

**Please circle the selection that applies:****Please indicate where you live:**☐ West Concord Village    ☐ Concord    ☐ Nearby Town    ☐ Elsewhere**Please list any additional comments you may have on the Survey and Concept Boards in space below:**

---

---

---

***Thank you for your participation!***

## APPENDIX 4.A

### Concord Zoning Bylaw and Subdivision Regulation Evaluation *in Reference to West Concord Village Center*

#### Applicable Zoning Districts

The Concord Zoning Bylaw and Map include the following zoning districts in West Concord Village Center:

- Business
- Industrial
- Limited Business (#8 – Concord Park)
- Industrial Park
- Residence C

The primary zoning district for the core area of the Village Center is **Business** which extends along Main Street and Commonwealth Avenue from the intersection of Main Street/Baker Avenue to the east and Commonwealth Avenue/Laws Brook Road to the north. Also included in this district is Westgate Park, Junction Square (business park) and the center portion of Maple Court where an apartment complex and 2 single family homes are located.

The **Industrial** district in West Concord Village Center includes the properties along Beharrell Street and mill buildings along the south side of Bradford Street. Industrial zoning also extends across the Nashoba Brook to the north covering the older industrial buildings at the east end of Winthrop Street, and on Conant Street and Domino Drive abutting the rail road tracts to the south.

The **Limited Business** #8 zoning district covers only the property of Concord Park between the two railroad right-of-ways to the south and west, and the Assabet River to the east. **Industrial Park** zoning is located to the east side of the railroad spur and encompasses the business parks along Baker Avenue.

The **Residence C** district covers the traditional village neighborhoods located south of the Village Center, west along Laws Brook Road, north along Commonwealth Avenue, and east along Main Street from the Cottage Street/Baker Avenue intersection to Route 2.

For the purpose of this analysis, the focus is on the two primary zoning districts in the Village Center – Business and Industrial.

#### Definitions

Definitions are contained in Section 1.3 of the Concord Zoning Bylaw. Comments specific to West Concord Village Center are highlighted in gray below.

*1.3.7 Dwelling:* A structure or portion thereof which is used exclusively for human habitation.

*1.3.8 Dwelling unit:* A structure or portion thereof providing complete, independent living facilities for one or more persons, including permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation.

*1.3.15 Multi-unit dwelling:* A structure containing more than two (2) dwelling units. This term shall include, but is not limited to, triplex, quadraplex, and townhouse structures containing three (3) or more dwelling units.

**1.3.19 Single-family detached dwelling:** A structure containing one dwelling unit designed for and used exclusively as a single housekeeping unit.

**1.3.20 Single-Family Semi-Detached Dwelling:** A single-family dwelling unit attached to another single-family dwelling unit by a common vertical wall, with each dwelling unit located on a separate lot.

These residential definitions are clear but they don't correspond directly to the Use Table under Section 4 of the Zoning Bylaw. Only "single family dwelling" and is listed as being permitted by right in the Business District but not allowed in the Industrial District. Single family detached homes in the Business District would potential be in conflict with business, industrial, and higher density residential uses well established in the Village Center. They would also be out of character with this traditional development pattern (small lots and large buildings) and scale of the Village Center. Multi-family structures (such as townhouses) could fit into the Village Center on the fringe areas creating a transitional area between the central business districts and surrounding neighborhoods but do not appear to be allowed in the Business District. Other single use residential forms are permitted in the Business District by special permit including Residential Compound (4.2.5), Residential Cluster Development (4.2.6), and Planned Residential Development (4.2.6). However, they appear to be targeted for more rural area with large minimum lot sizes and open space requirements.

## Allowable Uses

Section 4 of the Concord Zoning Bylaw classifies principal and accessory uses and identifies the specific zoning districts where they are permitted by right, by special permit, or not permitted. The table below evaluates the allowable uses in Table 1 of the zoning bylaws in the Business and Industrial Districts and as they pertain to the West Concord Village Center.

Additional comments on specific use classifications are made below.

**4.2.1 Single-family dwelling:** No more than one dwelling unit shall be located upon a lot except as provided in subsections 4.2.2, 4.2.3, and 4.2.4.

**4.2.3 Combined business/residence:** A dwelling unit or units may be located on the same lot where commercial uses are conducted provided that:

**4.2.3.1** Each such unit is **structurally part** of the commercial building, having common walls, foundation, roof and floor;

**4.2.3.2** At least **twenty percent** of the dwelling units (and no less than one unit) are available as affordable housing;

**4.2.3.3** **Open space** shall be provided on the lot (apart from any paved area) equal to twice the gross floor area of the residential portion of the building. Any deck, balcony or rooftop garden shall be considered as open space if its floor area is more than twenty-five (25) square feet;

The bylaw should facilitate an appropriate vertical and horizontal mix of uses, with commercial uses of public interest primarily occupying ground floor space. With single family dwellings requiring separate and larger lots the *Combined Business/Residence* is the only real opportunity for mixed use and higher density residential forms such as townhouses in West Concord Village Center. The provisions in sections 4.2.3.1 and 4.2.3.3 ensure that a development is both mixed use and mixed income. However, 4.2.3.1 does not provide a range or percentage of the square footage in commercial and residential use. This may result in developments being predominately residential with only a token amount of commercial space. The town should consider an upper and lower range of mixed uses involving residential. The on-site open space requirement in section 4.2.3.3 may be too high at twice the residential g.f.a. These developments would typically be higher density with a limited amount of space on site to provide quality and useable open space unless green roofs are incorporated

into the design which should be recommended specifically. Another option would be to allow for off-site public open space within the Village Center that would benefit the community as well as the tenants of a new development.

4.2.3.4 In a combined business/residence building where more than **ten percent** of the dwelling units are available as affordable housing, the Board may grant a special permit to allow a decrease in the amount of open space, an increase in the **height of the building to forty (40) feet** and/or a decrease in the number of parking spaces if the Board find that the proposed combined business/residence development is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this section and that it will not be detrimental or injurious to the neighborhood in which it is to take place.

Section 4.2.3.2 above requires 20% affordable units so the 10% reference under this section is not applicable.

The town should consider additional definitions and classifications for different forms of multi-family dwellings in the Village center such as townhouses

4.2.4 *Combined industrial/business/residence:* A dwelling unit or units and retail store(s) may be located on the same lot where industrial uses and business uses are conducted provided that:

4.2.4.1 Each such unit and retail store is structurally part of the industrial/business building, having common walls, foundation, roof and floor;

4.2.4.2 At least twenty percent of the dwelling units (and no less than one unit) are available as affordable housing;

4.2.4.3 Significant open space available principally for use by the residents shall be provided on the lot (apart from any paved area), such open space to be at least twenty-five (25%) of the gross floor area of the residential portion of the building. Any deck, balcony or rooftop garden shall be considered as open space if its floor area is more than twenty-five (25) square feet.

Same comments as made under section 4.2.3.3 above.

4.2.4.4 In a combined industrial/business/residence building, one or more retail store(s) may be allowed as a principal use, but in the aggregate they shall not exceed twenty-five (25) percent of the gross floor area of the building.

The town should consider new definition a new definition for Artists Lofts

4.2.4.5 In a combined industrial/business/residence building where more than **ten percent** of the dwelling units are available as affordable housing, the Board may grant a special permit to allow a decrease in the amount of open space, an increase in the height of the **building to forty (40) feet** and/or a decrease in the number of parking spaces if the Board finds that the proposed combined industrial/business/residence development is in harmony with the general purpose and intent of this section and that it will not be detrimental or injurious to the neighborhood in which it is to take place.

Same comments as made under section 4.2.3.4 above.

4.2.5 *Residential compound:* A limited subdivision of land for single-family dwellings in accordance with the provisions of Section 8.

4.2.6 *Residential cluster development:* Single-family dwelling in accordance with the provisions of Section 9.



4.2.7 *Planned residential development:* Single-family detached or attached dwelling or multi-unit structures of all types in accordance with the provisions of Section 10.

Residential compound (4.2.5), Residential cluster development (4.2.6), and Planned residential development are all permitted in the Business District but appear to be intended for more rural areas than the Village Center

4.4.1 *Municipal use:* Town of Concord facility.

The town should identify specific municipal uses that would not be appropriate in the Village Center such as storage and maintained facilities.

4.4.2 *Underground utility:* Underground facilities for communications or other utility uses.

The Town should consider requiring underground utilities on Main Street and Commonwealth Avenue in the Village Center.

4.5.1 *Retail store:* Sale and display of merchandise within a building. Sale of ready-to-consume foods and beverages in disposable containers for consumption outside the building will be permitted only as an accessory use to the principal retail operation.

This definition covers a significant variety of shops. The town should consider breaking retail down into more specific types and possibly size limitations, non-formula based businesses, and other performance standards that address the specific compatibility issues that may occur with certain types of businesses.

4.5.4 *Restaurant:* Restaurant, cafeteria, lunchroom or similar establishment whose principal business is the sale of prepared foods or beverages and whose principal method of operation includes either (1) service by a restaurant employee to a table or counter where the food or beverage is consumed, or (2) a cafeteria-type operation where foods and beverages are consumed within the restaurant building.

The town should consider size and non-formula restrictions for restaurants. Additionally outdoor dining should be clearly allowed and encouraged in the Village Center.

## Dimensional Requirements

**General Comments:** The Concord Zoning Bylaw has very flexible dimensional standards for the West Concord Village Center in terms of lot size, yards, and frontage. However, this does not ensure development that is in keeping with the historic development pattern that is so essential to the village. In addition to minimum (or no) standards maximum standards are needed in certain areas as described below. Traditional development characteristics for similar types of small downtowns and village centers to West Concord Village Center are as follows:

- Floor Area Ratio (FAR) - 2:1 to 3:1
- Minimum Lot Size – 4,000 to 7,000 s.f.
- Frontage – 25 to 75 feet
- Depth – 60 to 100
- Building Height – 25 to 45 feet (2 to 4 stories)
- Front Setbacks – None unless used for patio or sidewalk extension; civic uses 10 to 20 feet
- Side Setbacks – 0 to 15 feet typically used for pedestrian or vehicle access

Frontage (6.2.3)

The West Concord Business District has no frontage requirement but this is a critical dimension in village centers that the Planning Board should be aware of in the development review process. In order to encourage and enhance pedestrian activity, lot widths should be fairly narrow, so that people can walk past multiple storefronts in a short distance rather than a long stretch of blank walls or parking areas. A general rule of thumb is that the building frontage or façade should change every 8 seconds for a pedestrian to maintain and capture their interest. At an average rate of 3.5 feet per second this would convert to about 28 feet of frontage. Lot widths in traditional village centers, such as West Concord, should range from 25 to 50 feet with the goal of maintaining a continuous line of building fronts to the extent possible. (In many small village centers, lot widths have been as narrow as 20 feet across). In addition to reducing the minimum lot size and widths, the zoning regulations should mandate a maximum lot width (or a building segmentation every 50 to 75 feet) to present new structures from being too wide and out of scale with the traditional development patterns.

#### Required Front, Side and Rear Yards (6.2.6 through 6.2.8)

The keeping with the traditional development pattern in this historic village center, and goal for West Concord, is for buildings to come up to the sidewalk. Any setback should be controlled and performance standards included so that this front setback area is an extension and enhancement to the sidewalk (such as a terrace for outdoor dining or sitting area). Side lot areas should abut the neighboring building unless there is a specific purpose for setback such as to create access to the rear or other public enhancements such as parking or outdoor activities. Minimum front setbacks should be set at 0 feet (or a build to line) and maximum setbacks should be 10 to 15 feet (i.e. residential and institutional uses).

**6.2.11 Height:** The height of a building shall be measured as the vertical distance from the mean ground level of each side of the building to either the highest point of the exterior in the case of a flat roof or to the mean average finished grade between the plate and the ridge in the case of a pitched roof. Chimneys, spires, towers, and other projections not used for human occupancy or storage may extend above the height limits herein fixed except wind turbine facilities, which can only exceed the maximum height requirement by special permit granted by the Board.

The maximum building height of 35 stories is largely consistent with the current development patterns in the Village Center. However, a minimum height should also be required. For example a height of about 15 feet with a front façade elevation of 18 feet allows buildings that are only one story tall to achieve enough height and bulk to reinforce the existing Village Center development patterns and continue to frame and enclose the street.

The tallest building in the Business District in West Concord is the Concord 5&10 at 38 feet and the Bradford Street Mills are the tallest buildings in the Industrial District. The current zoning allows for a maximum height of 35 feet in both districts except under sections 4.2.3.4 and 4.3.2.5 where the Board may grant a special permit up to 40 feet under certain considerations. The town should consider an additional step-back provision such as in the Medical-Professional District where a building shall exceed thirty-five (35) feet in height unless such portion sets back from each street and boundary line an amount equal to the sum of (1) the applicable minimum yard requirement and two (2) feet for each foot of height in excess of thirty-five (35) feet, provided that in no case shall any portion of a building exceed 45 or 50 feet in height. This would provide an increase in height in the Village Center without creating a street enclosure that might be considered too high. It may also be tied to specific design requirements that control the building wall and elevation facing the street to ensure that they are pedestrian oriented with openings and articulation.

#### 6.2.12. Maximum Lot Coverage

Lot coverage requirements are minimal in West Concord Village Center. Dimensional coverage requirements in traditional downtowns are largely unnecessary and disruptive to the traditional development patterns. Density is desired in these areas and most open spaces in village centers are more formal public spaces such as commons, gardens or pocket parks. Floor area ratios are a more appropriate method of controlling development pattern and density in a village center environment.

**Other dimensional and design standards** that should be considered for the Village Center address the openings and appearance of the building. A “fenestration ratio” defines the amount (as a percentage) of window openings on the building’s façade (i.e. a blank wall has a fenestration ratio of 0). Windows, especially retail display windows, greatly contribute to (or diminish) the pedestrian environment. Attractive window displays are a key issue in West Concord Village Center as many of the traditional storefronts have been altered, there are closed blinds in several locations, and others are not attractively decorated. Attractive window displays give people a reason to walk by. At night, lit displays add a secondary level of lighting to the street, improving the ambiance and providing a sense of security.

Traditional downtowns have very high fenestration ratios on the first floor, usually on the order of 70 to 80%. Fenestration ratios should be incorporated into the zoning regulations particularly for the front facades and first floors. This should be required for all new buildings and older buildings should be restored over time to bring back the original façade openings and architectural details.

## Off-street Parking and Loading Requirements

**General Comments:** If the current parking standards were applied retroactively in the Village Center, it would probably render a much less dense development pattern. Parking standards for new development should be based on the differences in needs and demands for specific combinations of uses in the Village Center. Parking management and enforcement is also important in the Village Center. As redevelopment and revitalization occurs over time, it will become increasingly important that on-street parking spaces be available primarily to customers with a shorter time limit to encourage proper turnover. The other hand, employees and long term parking should be encouraged to utilize the outer areas of off-street parking.

The table below evaluates Section 7.7.2.1 including Table IV, the minimum parking spaces required by use, as they pertain to the Business and Industrial District in the Village Center.

**7.7.2.2 Increased parking demand:** When a building or use undergoes a change which involves any increase in the number of dwelling units, gross floor area, seating capacity or other unit of measurement used as a means of determining off-street parking, and when such change would result in a requirement for a greater number of parking spaces than exists on the site, the off-street parking shall be increased to meet the requirements of subsection 7.7.2.1, Table IV, for the entire building or use as changed.

**7.7.2.4 Joint parking facilities:** Off-street parking facilities for different buildings or uses may be provided and used collectively or jointly in any zoning district in which the separate uses would be permitted, subject to the following provisions:

- (a) Up to fifty (50) percent of the parking spaces required for educational, religious, lodge and club, indoor amusement, and restaurant uses may be provided and used jointly by banks, offices, retail stores, repair shops, service establishments, and other uses not normally open, used, or operated during similar hours if specifically approved by the Planning Board. The approval may be rescinded and additional parking shall be provided by the owners in the event that the Planning Board, after notice and public hearing thereon, determines joint use is resulting in a public nuisance or other adverse effects on the public health, safety, and welfare.

The section does not provide for residential uses

**7.7.2.6 Mixed use facilities:** Buildings or lots which contain more than one principal use are considered mixed use facilities. For the purpose of determining parking requirements for such a facility, each use component shall be treated as a separate principal use.

This section does not provide a reduction factor for mixed use buildings (i.e. residential and business) where parking is naturally shared and peak demand hours typically differ. A separate table should be added to calculate the reduction factor for mixed use such as is used in the SmartCode.

7.7.2.7 *Location:* All required parking or loading spaces shall be provided **on the same parcel** of land occupied by the use or building to which it is appurtenant; provided, however, that where, in the opinion of the Planning Board, there are practical difficulties in satisfying the requirement for parking spaces and/or if the public safety and convenience would be served better by another location, the Planning Board may authorize an alternative location for **nonresidential** parking subject to the following provisions:

Off-street parking should be specifically prohibited in the front yard of any building in the Village Center and only allowed in the side yard when it is well landscaped in front. Minimum side yard setbacks on Main Street and Commonwealth Avenue should be 0 feet to allow and encouraged shared and inter-connected parking lots.

The town should consider expanding this requirement to also allow for parking on abutting parcels with direct access to the primary parcel.

The sections above do not factor the use of public on or off-street parking spaces for business and residential uses which is typically used as a reduction factor in downtown and village zoning. Another common reduction factor for required on-site parking in village centers is to establish a parking fund and allow for a fee per space to be paid in lieu of private parking on-site. The fund is then used to create more public parking spaces in the Village Center.

7.7.2.12 *Relief from parking requirements:* The Board may, upon advice of the Planning Board, grant relief from the parking and loading requirements in Section 7.7.2 provided the Board finds that a literal application of such requirements would be unreasonable and that the desired relief may be granted without substantial detriment to the neighborhood and without derogating from the intent and purpose of this Bylaw. The Board may require the applicant to submit a written report, prepared by a qualified parking consultant, defining and evaluating the nature and impact of the requested relief.

This is an important provision but leaves it to the discretion of the Board without specific performance standards to determine the actual number of spaces that are needed for a given development.

7.7.4.6 *Small car spaces:* In parking lots with more than thirty (30) spaces, up to a maximum of thirty (30) percent of the total number of required spaces may be designed for small cars. In parking lots of thirty (30) or less spaces, up to a maximum of twenty (20) percent of the total number of required spaces may be designed for small cars.

Small car spaces shall be located such that they are grouped in one or more areas which are neither more nor less convenient to the use or building served than the full size spaces. Small car spaces shall be suitably and conspicuously identified through appropriate signing or pavement markings.

The town may want to consider the designation of spaces for cars used in common by tenants in the building or in the Village Center such as the Zip Car.

7.7.4.8 *Surfacing, drainage and curbing:* All parking facilities shall be graded, surfaced with asphalt, concrete or similar nonerosive material, and drained in a manner deemed adequate by the Planning Board to prevent nuisance of erosion or excessive water flow across public ways or abutting properties.

Entrance and exit driveways shall be defined clearly with curbing, signs, and pavement markings. Parking and loading spaces shall be marked clearly in accordance with the dimensions specified in subsections 7.7.4.1 and 7.7.4.2, above.

7.7.4.9 *Landscaping:* In order to separate parking areas from abutting streets, to provide areas for disposal of snow, and to provide visual relief from expanse of pavement and vehicles, landscaping shall

be provided in all parking areas containing five (5) or more parking spaces according to the Planning Board site plan rules and regulations in effect at the time.

Sections 7.7.4.8 and 7.7.4.9 above to provide for sustainable site design and Low Impact Development (LID) techniques such as pervious pavers, bioretention areas and bioswales, rain gardens, xeriscaping, and rain water collection systems. More specific parking lot landscaping and screening standards should be provided to ensure shading, pedestrian access, and buffering from certain neighboring uses.

## Subdivision Regulations

The Subdivision Regulations establish the process for subdividing and developing property in the Village including the design and provision of streets, sidewalks and utilities (sections 6.7 through 6.10). While the current street and sidewalk design may be appropriate in certain portions of the village it may not be in others. The design requirements for new streets or buildings fronting existing streets in the West Concord Village Center should be specific to the goal balancing traffic flow, convenient parking and pedestrian orientation.

More specific design standards should be created for different areas of the Village Center such as along Main Street Commonwealth Avenue, Bradford Street and Beharrel Street. The street, sidewalk and utility design standards should apply to new private developments as well as public capital improvement programs to existing street reconstruction and new street construction carried out by the town. Specific construction standards that should be addressed are as follows:

- There are not specific requirements for street shade trees, green strips, or tree pits in residential and business districts that apply to West Concord. More specific public and private area landscaping standards need to be developed and included in the subdivision regulations.
- There are no specific provisions for on-street parking on collectors in non-residential districts such as Main Street and Commonwealth Avenue.
- Curbing requirements call for a low-profile modified Cape Cod berm which is not appropriate in the Village Center where granite curbing is needed.
- There is a minimum curb radius of 30 feet but no maximum (also needed in the Village Center).
- The six (6) foot concrete sidewalk requirement is appropriate for most of the Village Center but should be 10 feet along Main Street and Commonwealth Avenue as is typical along most of the corridor and with a pedestrian-oriented district.
- There are no specific provisions for curb cut design or access management techniques.
- There are no low impact design (LID) standards that would allow for stormwater and water quality control measures such as pervious pavement, grass pavers, bioswales, stormwater planters and similar applications.